"Rooted In Our Past, Renewal For Our Future"

Saskatchewan Archives Board

2011-16 Strategic Plan

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"Rooted In Our Past, Renewal For Our Future"
Saskatchewan Archives Board 2011-2016 Strategic Plan
was approved by the Saskatchewan Archives Board of Directors
On February 22, 2011

"Rooted In Our Past, Renewal For Our Future"

A Strategic Plan For The Saskatchewan Archives Board
2011-2016

Introduction

In 1997 the Saskatchewan Archives began the creation of a strategic plan that would serve as the basis for renewal and improvement during the first decade of the new century.

The key elements of the strategic plan, approved by the Board in 1999, included:

- Greater accountability for the Saskatchewan Archives as an independent entity reporting to the Legislative Assembly, or as an independent board reporting to a Minister with a strengthened legislative framework and improved operational connections with central agencies of government
- An increased role to act as the central agency responsible for managing government information
- The creation and implementation of a policy and planning/administrative services unit to support the Provincial Archivist
- The adoption of a comprehensive "portfolio" management structure, reorganizing human resources around specialized thematic portfolios, alongside generic support services
- The re-organization of the Saskatoon office around portfolio clusters suitable to the northern part of the province, to be housed in an appropriate, accessible, visible facility, shared with other partners
- Adoption of the "split facility" option, as the most acceptable and appropriate medium-term solution to accommodation in Regina
- A five-year special project to eliminate the huge records processing backlog

- The appointment of a professional conservator to increase quality of collections maintenance, integrate preservation management into organizational planning and priorities and provide leadership to the wider archival community
- In partnership with the national and provincial archival community, scanning and digitization of selected finding aids and archival records for use by schools, libraries, governments and researchers

Over the past decade the Saskatchewan Archives has achieved many of the goals of this plan:

- The legislative framework was strengthened by *The Archives Act, 2004*
- The new Act reinforced the Saskatchewan Archives' role as the central agency responsible for developing, regulating and disseminating records/information management standards for Government
- A Corporate Services Unit for the Saskatchewan Archives was created in September 2007 with the staffing of a Manager, Human Resources, Administration and Corporate Services and the reallocation of internal resources to allow for 4.5 full-time equivalent staff
- The reorganization of the Saskatchewan Archives' programs in 2007, while not reflecting the portfolio structure first envisioned in 1999, has resulted in expanded capabilities as well as greatly increased integration and collaboration between staff in various archival functions
- A Collections Management and Preservation Unit was formed in the 2007 reorganization. The unit has 4.5 staff including a position dedicated to preservation activities
- The 2007 reorganization also shifted the Saskatoon office to a greater focus on the delivery of reference services
- The introduction of descriptive standards software in 2007 now allows all new finding aids and descriptions of records to be created in a digital format suitable for mass dissemination on the Web. As well, the number of images available in digital format is constantly increasing. In addition, non-digital guides are being scanned and linked through descriptions for improved access

The strategic plan was instrumental in moving the Saskatchewan Archives forward. Despite this progress, challenges remain. For example:

- Accommodation shortcomings continue to be a major issue
- A substantial backlog of unprocessed records remains and substantial backlogs have developed in other service areas
- It has not been possible, due to fiscal limitations, or feasible, due to the lack of a functioning conservation lab, to engage a professional conservator

The time has come to develop the next strategic plan for the Saskatchewan Archives. The preparation of this plan is the vehicle to review the vision, mission, mandate and values of the Saskatchewan Archives and to set new goals for the next five years. Development of this plan considered the growing societal interest in government accountability, efficiency, transparency and in digital service delivery and protection of privacy. The implementation of this new strategic plan will be instrumental to the continued growth and development of the Saskatchewan Archives.

The Planning Process

This strategic plan draws heavily on a substantial volume of work undertaken in recent years by, or on behalf of, the Saskatchewan Archives to examine particular issues and challenges facing the Saskatchewan Archives. Examples include the Capital Planning Strategy 2009 report prepared by architectural and engineering consultants and the business plans for the Digital Archives Initiative.

With the aid of an experienced external consultant/facilitator (Mr. Brian Christie, from the University of Regina), the management team of the Saskatchewan Archives met for a half-day in August 2010 in a "planning for planning" session.

Management next consulted with the Saskatchewan Archives' staff through written submissions and in-face meetings using planning/related questions such as:

- Where would you like Saskatchewan Archives to be 5 years from now?
- What barriers exist?
- What should be our organizational priorities?

Following the consultation, in September 2010 the management team and the consultant met over a two day period and employing a structured strategic planning methodology, determined the content of this document. A draft of the plan was prepared by the consultant, reviewed by management and staff and then presented to the Saskatchewan Archives Board for further discussion and approval.

Vision, Mission, Values and Mandate

The 2011-2016 strategic plan revises the vision, mission and values of the Saskatchewan Archives. The mandate of the Saskatchewan Archives is prescribed in legislation.

Vision

A trusted, respected, accessible and progressive guardian of Saskatchewan's documentary heritage.

Mission

- To acquire, manage, preserve and make accessible records of significance that reflect the rights and activities of Saskatchewan's people - those of public and private organizations and those of individuals
- To foster government accountability and transparency by advancing and facilitating responsible records management in the public sector
- To promote and assist the many uses of the documentary records of Saskatchewan.

- To engage the people of Saskatchewan with their documentary heritage and to foster an understanding of our collective identity
- To provide leadership and support for the on-going development of archival work

Values

The rights and responsibilities of a democratic society are the foundation of our work.

Our core values include:

- Accountability to the people of Saskatchewan and our patrons, past, present and future
- Innovation, leadership and collaboration
- Equitable access to public information and respect for individual privacy
- Integrity, transparency and ethical behaviour
- Professionalism and dedication to service excellence

Mandate

The objects and functions of the Saskatchewan Archives Board are:

- To acquire and preserve public and private records of significance to Saskatchewan and to facilitate access to those records
- To be the permanent repository of public and court records
- To facilitate the management of public and court records
- To encourage and support archival activities and the archival community

The Archives Act, 2004

Goals and Strategies

The strategic plan for the Saskatchewan Archives identifies six key goals for the period 2011-2016. These goals and strategies identify specific priorities and targets which, when achieved, will complement and support the ongoing core functions of the organization to acquire, preserve, manage and provide access to the documentary heritage of the province. In some cases, implementing these strategies will provide an opportunity to review, renew and improve current approaches of the Saskatchewan Archives. Each of these goals is described in the following pages with a statement of the goal, a summary of the issue and discussion of its significance, a description of actions taken to date and a set of strategy elements for achieving the goal.

1. Accommodations (ACCOM)[1]

Goal Statement

[1] This section draws on material contained in the *Capital Planning Assessment 2009, December 2009*, prepared by Pattison MGM Architectural Services Ltd., Brownlee Beaton Kreke (Regina) Ltd., Macpherson Engineering Ltd., and Alfa Engineering Ltd. for the Saskatchewan Ministry of Government Services and the Saskatchewan Archives Board.

Meet the present storage and office space needs of the Saskatchewan Archives through current facility improvements and interim facility acquisition while securing funding and support for a centralized, purpose-built facility in Regina and upgraded Saskatoon facilities.

Issue

The ability of the Saskatchewan Archives to deliver its mandate is compromised by the poor condition of its physical facilities. The current facilities place the entire records collection at risk of catastrophic loss due to poor environmental conditions, potential building systems malfunction and the potential for serious security failures.

Significance

- Building conditions create risks related to inadequate storage, security and preservation of the collection
- Inadequate fire protection threatens permanent irreplaceable loss and-or damage to the collection
- Inadequate security threatens the physical safety of the collection and the legislated privacy of personal information, including health records
- Lack of suitable space results in inadequate work conditions for staff and occupational health and safety issues
- Suitable facilities are lacking for programming initiatives necessary to conduct public education about the collection, display and research
- The operational disconnect between the Saskatchewan Archives' staff units, located with three office and three storage locations in Regina, creates difficulties in management, coordination and staff cohesion, operational inefficiencies and risks to the collection during transfers
- The Saskatchewan Archives suffers from a chronic shortage of growth space for the collection, resulting in the potential for documents to be destroyed or damaged prior to their acquisition

Actions to date

- The Report, *Capital Planning Assessment 2009,* has identified the preferred strategy for addressing immediate needs with respect to security and the long-term strategy to provide adequate facilities
- Stop-gap measures to enhance security for the collection storage areas in Regina have been approved by the Saskatchewan Archives Board and implementation is underway in 2010-2011

Strategy elements

- Continue implementation of the stop-gap security upgrades started in 2010-2011
- Develop a funding strategy for the implementation of the long-term remedies in Regina and Saskatoon
- Explore the potential for partnership arrangements for the new facilities
- Identify the preferred locations for the new facilities
- Secure funding to proceed with the construction and renovation projects

2. Revenue Strategy (RS)

Goal Statement

Secure sufficient government funding and maximize self-generated revenue potential.

Issue
The Saskatchewan Archives currently has insufficient annual operating revenues to fulfill its mandate and pursue its mission.

Significance
- There are substantial backlogs in all core functions
- These backlogs negatively impact client services, staff morale and the reputation of the Saskatchewan Archives
- The Saskatchewan Archives has insufficient human resources and inadequate equipment to perform its mandated functions

Actions to date
- Phase 1 implementation of a new service fee structure
- A request for separate funding from government for the Digital Archives Initiative (Digital Records Program), was successful for phase I of the project and a request for phase 2 is under consideration by government
- A Board and staff working group has begun to investigate the establishment of a foundation for fundraising. In the meantime, a Friends of the Saskatchewan Archives Group initiative is underway
- Internal processes have been altered to increase efficiency and to manage, to the extent possible, with insufficient resources: i.e., ***More Product Less Processing*** in records processing activities
- Workspace has been consolidated. Project charters have been established to define scope, responsibilities and timelines for the schedule development process

Strategy elements
- Establish a foundation for fundraising (this will require legislation)
- Re-examine the Saskatchewan Archives' governance structure and address government relations to enhance government funding
- Explore marketing opportunities
- Examine and amend charging strategy (fees for services) for all areas of the Saskatchewan Archives
- Develop a communications strategy
- Pursue funding partnerships and cost-sharing of projects

3. Digital Records Program (DRP)

Goal Statement

Continue to implement the five-phase plan for the Digital Records Program.

Issue

The Saskatchewan Archives has very limited ability to ingest, preserve and make available digital information.

Significance

- An estimated 99 per cent of all new records are born digital
- The inability to deal with these records results in their permanent loss
- As a result, the Saskatchewan Archives is not meeting its mandate
- The loss of records also threatens government accountability and transparency
- The use of stop-gap alternatives (ie: printed copies) to the original digital record impacts the authenticity of the record
- The use of alternatives also creates redundancy in work and storage of records

Actions to date

- A Digital Records Program has been defined and established. A five-phase implementation has been planned
- Phase 1 of the program has been funded and completed: conceptualization, process mapping and staff training
- Funding from government for phase 2 has been requested: to establish the human and technology infrastructure to start ingesting records
- Digitization of land records is underway through a partnership project
- Work on policies, procedures, best practices and standards is underway
- The Saskatchewan Archives is participating in two Canadian working groups and collaborations regarding digital records

Strategy elements

- Implement phases 2 to 5 of the Digital Records Program

4. Managing the Permanent Collection (MPC)

Goal Statement

Strengthen the management and preservation of the Saskatchewan Archives' holdings.

Issue
Due to insufficient resources, there are weaknesses in the control of the Saskatchewan Archives' permanent collection.

Significance
- The Saskatchewan Archives is not able to manage its collection in a manner that meets its mandate or fulfills its mission
- Due to resource inadequacies, the Saskatchewan Archives cannot use the tools it has to the full extent of their capacity
- Insufficient conservation and preservation resources result in reduced activities and deterioration of and damage to the holdings and loss of records
- There are substantial backlogs in appraisal and acquisition, records processing and legislative compliance
- A portion of the records cannot be readily accessed or identified
- Obsolete formats and inadequately maintained equipment are also barriers to access. Aging media needs to be migrated
- Environmental conditions also threaten the holdings
- Staff succession issues are a concern

Actions to date
- A vinegar syndrome survey of motion picture film has been completed and initial treatment undertaken where indicated
- 'Threshold', an archival management database application, has been developed and implemented in part: the accession and record description modules are being employed
- A condition assessment of the collection, through a sampling procedure, is underway
- An equipment inventory assessment has been completed and stop-gap repairs undertaken
- Security improvements and upgrades have been identified, approved and funded.
- A strategic planning exercise for Preservation Management has been initiated
- The needs for additional human resources have been defined and new positions have been proposed
- A number of partnerships have been initiated or are being developed to assist in the management of the collection, its preservation and media migration

Strategy elements
- Complete the strategic plan for Preservation Management and 'Threshold' implementation; move forward the priority components of this Plan, including staff resources
- Complete the security upgrades
- Conduct a shelf-by-shelf collections inventory and populate 'Threshold' with the results to activate the collections management and preservation modules
- Continue to seek partnerships that support collections management
- Obtain an appropriate conservation and storage environment for the entire collection (see Accommodations)

5. Electronic Service Delivery (ESD)

Goal Statement

Fully implement a web presence responsive to the expectations of clients and staff.

Issue

The Saskatchewan Archives is unable to meet demands for electronic service delivery.

Significance

- The Saskatchewan Archives is not meeting the expectations of its clients: the public, government, and researchers
- Opportunities are being missed to widen the client base, engage in partnerships, undertake outreach and showcase the holdings
- There is no on-line access to descriptions of the holdings
- The Saskatchewan Archives projects an image of being antiquated and out-of-date
- The Saskatchewan Archives is unable to meet government expectations to interact electronically, for example in the handling of disposal requests and the delivery of training
- The Saskatchewan Archives website does not employ current technology; the website is static and not interactive
- 'Threshold', the archival management database application, is under-utilized
- Inadequacies result in work inefficiencies, added effort by staff and patrons and staff frustration
- The web presence planning is linked strategically to the Digital Records Program, information management, appraisal and acquisitions, reference services and records processing

Actions to date

- A three-phase plan for web services development has been prepared. Funding for phase 1 has been secured
- A mid-sized storage server has been acquired and is being used for test purposes
- A RFI (request for information) process for website development has been completed. Responses to a RFP (request for proposals) are currently being evaluated
- A webmaster is to be recruited
- The web component of 'Threshold' has been purchased (but not yet installed). Report training has been completed
- Several digitization projects and partnerships are underway (e.g., land records and civil court records – over 2.2 million images digitized)
- Conversions are underway with respect to electronic finding aids and item-level descriptions of the historic photographs collection

Strategy elements

- Complete phase 1 of the web services plan with a redevelopment of the website and a revamped public face ("look and feel"), including a public interface with 'Threshold'
- Obtain sustainable funding for phases 2 and 3 plus the on-going operation of the new website and electronic services
- Develop and implement phases 2 and 3 of the web services plan:
    - Staff training, client training, process revisions and organizational rollout
    - Phase 2: increase on-line records, electronic service delivery to government (e.g., acceptance of electronic records disposal requests), pilots with ministries of electronic transmission of records and records descriptions
    - Phase 3: move pilots to full deployment

6. Processes (PRO)

Goal Statement

Develop and implement processes to address backlogs and free resources to address emerging issues and growth needs.

Issue

Backlogs in all archival functions are negatively impacting the image of the Saskatchewan Archives and the fulfillment of its mandate, while limiting growth and development with respect to its mission.

Significance

- The Saskatchewan Archives is not meeting its mandate because of backlogs in all units that cannot be remedied with current resources
- A credibility gap exists among patrons, staff and the archival community because service expectations are not being met
- The Saskatchewan Archives has limited capacity to deal with growing complexities with respect to legislative, legal and societal expectations in the areas of access to information and protection of privacy, social media, etc.
- Staff is impacted by a lack of time and funds to train and become familiar with the ever-growing collection
- The Saskatchewan Archives has insufficient resources to fully implement internal records management practices
- The Saskatchewan Archives must continue to realize efficiencies in order to achieve a better balance between demands and limited resources

Actions to date

- An operational records schedule system has been completed for the Saskatchewan Archives
- New tools, manuals, guidelines and policies have been developed for appraisal and acquisitions, records management, information management, records processing, references services, outreach services and legislative compliance and access
- A number of staff positions have been moved from term to permanent appointments
- Fully detailed process maps have been prepared
- Senior staff are actively participating in provincial and federal councils, committees and working groups

Strategy elements:

- Re-examine the Saskatchewan Archives' work processes within units to maximize efficiency with limited resources through a "Lean Review"
- Determine priorities for resource redeployment
- Increase staff training and development, including cross-training
- Acquire an EDRMS (electronic data records management system)
- Obtain approval and funding for increased staffing in key areas, (ie: Legislative Compliance Officer)

Conclusion

The Saskatchewan Archives plays the vital and valued role of preserving and making available the documentary heritage of Saskatchewan for current and future generations. The Saskatchewan Archives' functions are also instrumental in assuring public rights and responsibilities in our democratic society. This strategic plan describes essential developments and how they may be accomplished, in order to permit the Saskatchewan Archives to meet its mandate and fulfill its mission in the years to come.